

The Honorable Tim Johnson
Chair
Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs

September XX, 2011

Chair Johnson and Ranking Member Shelby:

The local, state and national organizations listed below urge you to take swift action on Section 8 voucher reform legislation. We believe it is important that the Senate Banking Committee work to enact comprehensive voucher reform legislation at its earliest opportunity. The savings and efficiencies created by this good-government bill are needed as soon as possible. Tight budgets are likely to place enormous pressure on HUD's rental assistance programs in 2012 and later years, and the bill's provisions would help local agencies stretch limited funds and minimize the risk of harsh cuts in assistance to needy families.

House and Senate stakeholders reached broad agreement in late 2010 on a Section 8 voucher reform draft bill that would result in more than \$700 million in savings over the next five years. The draft bill would accomplish responsible and important cost savings and would also streamline the administration of HUD's rental assistance programs. In addition, the rent-setting and income determination processes for the nearly five million households assisted by the housing choice voucher, public housing and project-based Section 8 programs would be simplified while the bill also encourages increased earned income by residents.

The December 1, 2010 draft bill also included critical, non-controversial provisions on voucher funding and the project-basing of vouchers. Such provisions would provide clear direction to the Department of Housing and Urban Development on voucher renewal funding and would ensure that every precious dollar of federal housing funding is well-spent. The draft bill's important enhancements to how housing choice vouchers can be project-based to particular developments would lead to even greater affordable housing options in more communities.

The House has already begun to move a draft Section Eight Savings Act legislation forward, demonstrating the continuing bipartisan support for common-sense improvements to the voucher and other rental assistance programs. We urge the Senate Banking Committee to act on voucher reform legislation this fall, and to work expeditiously to reach agreement with the House to enable the President to sign this long over-due bill into law.

Thank you for your leadership on affordable housing. We look forward to working with you on Section 8 voucher reform enactment.

Sincerely,
National groups
State groups listed by state

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
National Affordable Housing Management Association
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Low Income Housing Coalition

cc: (members of the committee)